DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 263 057 SP 026 649

AUTHOR Kelly, Eugene W., Jr.
TITLE The Relationship of Public Policy to the Goals of Teacher Education.
PUB DATE 28 Feb 85
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (Denver, CO, February 27-March 2, 1985).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Objectives; *Educational Policy; Higher Education; Institutional Characteristics; *Policy Formation; *Teacher Education

ABSTRACT

Educational policy and the institutional goals of teacher education should be complementary and mutually reinforcing. However, interests, perspectives, and pressures that influence the evolution and implementation of educational policy often differ from those that shape the institutional goals of teacher education. A comprehensive framework for integrative analysis of, and action on, diverse forces influencing public policy and teacher education is proposed. This framework consists of four broad knowledge and action areas. First, teacher education is presented as an open system, complex internally, and in dynamic interaction with the university world, the broader education profession, and the public sector. Second, clarity about both the primary and secondary goals of university teacher education is essential to effective goal achievement in relation to public policy. Third, convergent action on policy and institutional goals requires a comprehensive understanding of the multiple forces impacting both areas. Fourth, the achievement of teacher education goals through public policy requires a set of diverse and complementary action strategies that can handle divergent as well as shared goals and can manage power differentials. With this conceptual system, teacher educators are in a position to act clearly and decisively on institutional goals and have a positive influence on the development of public policy. (Author/JD)

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The Relationship of Public Policy to the Goals of Teacher Education

Eugene W. Kelly, Jr.
School of Education and Human Development
George Washington University
AACTE Annual Meeting
Denver, Colorado
February 28, 1985

A recent Richmond (Va) Times-Dispatch news feature, under the headline, "Education deans upset over plan," opened with this paragraph-sentence: "Over opposition of the deans of some education schools, Virginia has already acted to correct many of the teacher training and licensing ills scorned by Emily Feistritzer in a Washington news conference last week, says Dr. S. John Davis, state superintendent of public instruction." I realize that this is a slanted and potentially misleading introduction to a complex situation in Virginia. The remainder of the news story expands on the lead sentence and brings a modicum of balance to the full story. And, I am sure, you can get a more complete picture, including the gory details, from our colleague deans from the Virginia schools and departments of education. Even a thorough reading of the Virginia newspapers will provide brighter sides of teacher education in the Old Dominion.

My point in referring to this news story, and especially its headline and opening sentence, is not for the purpose of commenting on the Virginia situation. What this story illustrates, at least in part, is a central problem in the relationship of public policy to the institutional goals of teacher education. Simply put, and this is certainly not new with me, the interests, perspectives and pressures that influence the evolution and implementation of public policy often differ or diverge from those that shape the institutional goals of teacher education. For anyone who yearns for a fully rational and coherent world, the conflict between research-based, carefully thought-out and designed goals and methods of educating effective teachers and the apparent mercurial and media-hyped vagaries of policy formation - this conflict can be both depressing and maddening. Should not policy incorporate and reflect the research and experience-based objectives and methods of teacher education at its best? From this perspective the teacher educator asks "Why should research-based objectives and methods yield to other factors in the education of teachers?" On the other hand, policy makers may ask: "Why do some of the public policy ideas of teacher educators appear at odds with their own research or evident public needs?"

Policy formulation regarding teacher education proceeds at a pace not always set by teacher educators and not always in directions of their choosing or liking. Clearly, factors that influence public policy often differ from those that shape the institutional goals of teacher education. This conflict between

SP 026 649

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different perspectives and interests can have effects on public policy that are disturbing to teacher educators not to mention policy makers. But are these conflicts and divergent approaches as unreasonable or negative as they first appear? I suggest they are not. I will illustrate this with three examples.

First, consider the divergent pressures that the impending teacher shortage will exert on the already incredibly complex, not to say chaotic, situation in teacher certification. Without analyzing the multiple philosophies and motives of those who influence and those who seek to influence teacher certification, I believe it is fair to say that local school officials who face a persistent shortage of subject-qualified teachers may try to change or at least temporarily adjust teacher certification policies in a direction contrary to quality assurance goals of teacher education. School officials by and large certainly want the best qualified teacher-candidates, and teacher educators do not want classrooms without teachers. But the prospect of teacher-empty classrooms will tend to exert an influence at odds with the drive to upgrade teacher certification.

Second, financial considerations certainly create conflicting influences in policy formulation. Inadequate salaries, assigned by budget-conscious legislators, obviously reduce the attractiveness of teacher education for talented students. On a somewhat smaller scale, a LEA's budget constraints may lead to policies for in-house inservice that is less expensive than college or university-based inservice, thereby undermining the goal of teacher education to contribute to the professional development of experienced teachers. Even staff development directors who value the contributions of university teacher educators to inservice programs may unwittingly weaken the school-university link by budget-driven overreliance on inhouse professional development.

Third, conflicts in teacher education policy also occur because of different philosophical mindsets. For example, the chairman of the chemistry department at George Washington University is convinced that the improvement of teaching depends in large part on the abolition of schools of teacher education, a position he has stated publicly. In a similar vein, in a recent issue of the The Chronicle of Higher Education, we were treated to the curious thesis that universities should get out of the business of teaching teachers, claiming that "there is evidence they are structually and philosophically incapable of providing the kind of training that practicing teachers need" (1985, p. 88). I have this vision of a whole series of Chronicle articles on "Universities Should Get Out of The Business of...", let's say, "Educating Physicians", "Training Business Administrators", Training Social Workers", etc., etc. At any rate, since this opinion was advanced by an associate professor of education, it

may not count as a conflicting influence from outside teacher education.

Potential for more serious and detrimental effects on teaching education policy come from a philosophical bias characterized by a low regard for pedagogy and an exalted esteem for content knowledge. Since content knowledge and pedagogical training are both important to effective teaching, teacher educators usually object to casting them into an either/or argument. Nevertheless, strongly competing ideas about content knowledge and pedagogy can have counterproductive influences on teacher education policy.

These examples, which are just a few of many that could be cited, illustrate two inescapable and powerful facts: (1) Public policy related to teacher education (and education generally) and the professional and institutional goals of teacher education are complex and dynamically interrelated; (2) Situational, economic, institutional and philosophical factors that influence the evolution, formulation and implementation of public policy often differ from, even conflict with, those that shape the professional and institutional goals of teacher education.

The interrelationship of these factors have critically important implications for teacher educators in their efforts both to influence public policy on education and to determine the goals and practices of teacher education in an institutional and professional sense. Put bluntly, when teacher educators ignore or deal inadequately with public policy and the wider issues affecting public policy, they run the risk of undermining teacher education goals and the availability of resources for achieving these goals. Additionally, and even more importantly, teacher educators' inactivity, ineffectiveness, or inordinate narrowness of purpose with regards to public policy can contribute to the current badly fragemented condition of public policy in education, including the adverse effect that this condition may have on improvements in schooling and student learning.

The conceptual and practical issue confronting teacher educators is how to take effective integrative action in the face of complex and frequently competing forces - forces that bear on the intertwining development of public policy in education and the goals and practices of teacher education. From this point on I will propose and discuss four broad knowledge and action areas that can provide a comprehensive framework for integrative analysis of and action on diverse forces influencing public policy and teacher education.

Teacher Education as An Open System

First, a word about teacher education as an open system.

Systems theory provides a conceptual framework for understanding teacher education as an open system, complex internally, and in dynamic interaction with the university world, the broader education profession and the public sector. This of course is not a new idea or perspective. However, the value of an open systems perspective for teacher education lies in its usefulness to problem solving. For example, open systems thinking can help forestall single-focused solutions, such as merit pay plans, or linear solutions, such as extended study programs. Open systems thinking will also work against closed system solutions, such as improving teaching methods courses without upgrading admissions requirements to teacher education, or status-quo-perserving solutions, such as imposive classroom teaching methods without expanding the professional influence of teachers on the whole of schooling. If we are serious about teacher education as an open system and appreciate in detail what this means, then we are less likely to fall into narrow-gauge, disconnected problem-solving that may create as many problems as it solves.

Several elements of systems theory (Laszlo, 1972) are especially enlightening and helpful for dealing with institutional teacher education goals in relation to public policy. Obviously, teacher education, as an open human system, means that, it necessarily functions and develops in relation to systems and forces in its environment. In fact it will lose vitality and decrease in effectiveness if it operates in a closed manner, like a grandfather clock, ticking away in some quiet corner and needing only an occasional winding to keep its mechanism going.

Unconscious closed system thinking by teacher educators is detrimental to clear policy analysis and policy development in the broader societal context. Tullock and Wagner note that "policy analysis is almost never concerned with a closed system..." (1978, p.6), and Bardach maintains that "tinkering" with a larger system may be more productive than a limited approach to change (Bardach, 1981). In this vein of "tinkering with a larger system", the recent AACTE commission on excellence teacher education manifested an unsettling inclination to regard teacher educators, despite increasing rhetoric and sporadic practice to the contrary, as tied almost exclusively to formal schooling at the expense of the broader universe of education. A clear open-system perspective could help to deter this self-limiting approach.

Systems theory also gives us what I call conceptual security in recognizing and even welcoming powerful influences from the environment. For example questions from legislators about dubious admissions requirements, or concerns of civil rights groups about declining minority enrollments in teacher education, may be understood as a form of positive feedback that creates an

opportunity for improving the overall system of teacher education. In situations such as these, real progress, rather than cosmetic or ephemeral changes, is likely when teacher educators can resist a closed system tendency to mass forces to prevent change. Instead of simple self-adaptation that largely preserves the equilibrium of the status quo, for example establishing a new accreditation system that leaves unchanged the present number of teacher education institutions, open systems theory assists us conceptually and practically towards adaptive self-reorganization, that is, toward making substantive changes that both preserve and advance teacher education.

For those of us who become nervous that all this talk of change and reorganization is opening us up to another round of uninformed intrusion by single-minded reformers or the fadish propaganda of diletantte enthusiasts, systems theory is legitimately reassuring with its concept of boundaries. The proper functioning of systems and subsystems requires clear bounderies that both protect a system from undue interference from other systems while allowing beneficial interaction. When boundaries become diffuse, systems become enmeshed and their proper functioning is disrupted. For example, clarity about the teacher education domain within the university is important in order to prevent a careless dispersal or emasculation of teacher education research and scholarship in building a body of knowledge about pedagogy and the teaching-learning process.

Understanding teacher education according to open systems theory provides a foundation of integrity and stability while incorporating positive and substantive changes. It is the ideal theory for AACTE's 1985 management theme: "Continuity and Changes: Necessary Commitments for 1985."

Goals of SCDEs

Second, teacher educators must be clear about their own institutional and professional goals. Clarity about the goals of teacher education, or more specifically teacher education units (SCDEs), is essential to effective goal achievement in relation to public policy. Such goals clearly include (1) the professional preparation of competent beginning teachers and other entry-level and advanced educational personnel, and (2) research in the twofold domain of pedagogy, i.e., the teaching and learning processes.

In addition to these obvious goals, there is a need for clear self-understanding about an influential subset of organizational, academic and personal-social goals. These latter, including such goals as institutional acceptability within a college or university structure, recognition for scholarly and research productivity, and job security in a tenure system, exercise a

subtle but powerful influence on the positions that teacher educators take on public policy issues. For example, university teacher educators who are under pressure to conduct research and publish may be understandably reluctant to give wholehearted support to a state mandated system for the supervision of first year teachers when that system requires a heavy time time commitment by university faculty. In this case, institutional teacher education goals, namely research and publication, may strongly influence the position that teacher educators take toward an important public policy matter, namely the provision of adequate supervisory support for beginning teachers. One can almost see the news headline: "State education faculty oppose novice teacher plan." And the first paragraph would read: "Over the opposition of the state's teacher education faculty, the state superintendent of education has decided to begin a program of supervisory support for first year teachers." If you had not heard my opening quotation of a real headline and news story from Virginia, you may be inclined to reject this hypothetical news story as improbable nonsense. Not only is it not improbable, not only is it well within the journalistic slant, what is more, teacher educators could become well-meaning and unwitting accomplices in such a story by opposing one good idea from their own perspective to a different good idea from the public's perspective.

Referring to the two primary objectives of teacher education, namely professional preparation and research, it hardly seems possible that these would conflict with any public policy forces. Or does it? Last year's teacher certification turmoil in New Jersey shows that influential policy makers, with the stated motive of improving education and teaching in the state's schools, were (and maybe still are, despite vigorous and legitimate opposition) ready to institute a whole new route to teacher certification with little involvement of teacher educators. If the purpose of university-based teacher education in New Jersey was the preparation of persons for teacher certification, apparently little note was taken of that purpose; indeed a positive disdain was manifested toward expertise of teacher educators. I will return to this sad story again in illustrating a final point about balancing advocacy and bargaining strategies. The point here is that even the central purpose and expertise of a large and impressive system of teacher education like New Jersey's can, at least temporarily, become disconnected from the policy making forum.

As for what we might call the internal institutional goals of teacher educators, such as achieving tenure, building a research program, obtaining outside funding for special projects, meeting state-mandated FTE requirements, to mention only a few, teacher educators are not immune from having these secondary, but quite important concerns, influence their positions on policy

issues. For example, how prepared are teacher educators to accept program accreditation policies that require specific admission standards, including quantitative standards - a move that could depress enrollments? How ready are leading research professors to support teacher induction policies that would encourage their providing clinical supervision for first year teachers? Are the so-called teaching-oriented colleges of teacher education prepared to accept policy that would closely link clinical teacher education with substantive pedagogical research?

These, and most other teacher education policy matters, are subject to legitimately divergent argumentation. The point here is not to preclude legitimate diversity in reaching policy decisions. Rather it is to uncover for ourselves how cherished professional and personal goals influence the positions we take on public policy for teacher education.

Multiple Forces Affecting Teacher Education

Third, given the multiplicity of forces bearing on public policy and institutional goals in teacher education, teacher educators need a comprehensive conceptual model. This model should identify and organizes at least in a board manner, all the major factors that influence teacher education, here understood comprehensively to include preservice and inservice education and the conditions necessary for maintaining a strong teaching profession. One possible model for organizing these factors is presented in a recent GAO report (1984). Titled "A Model of Influences on Teacher Quality", this scheme organizes over 30 social, personal, professional, economic and political factors in three-stages - teacher preparation, entry, and retention - and at four levels - national, state, individual, and other. The model, which is too comples to present fully here, includes such teacher preparation factors as labor market forces and student aid at the national level, college accreditation at the state level, entry requirements at the university level, and perceived job opportunities and personal values at the individual level. With regards to factors that influence entry into the teaching profession, the model includes at the national level the status of teaching; at the state level, certification requirements; at the school level, the conditions of teaching; and at the individual level, perceived job alternatives. With regards to factors that influence teacher retention, the model includes the national agenda of goals and opportunities; at the state level, salaries and pension vesting; at the school/community level, demographics and reductions in force; and at the individual level, age and job alternatives.

This partial listing of factors illustrates the range and diversity of forces that impinge on public policy and

institutional goals in teacher education. Just as importantly, it highlights the necessity for teacher educators, when they are considering institutional goals and public policies, to weigh carefully not only obvious and immediate factors, such as admissions, program and graduation requirements, but also a variety of potentially countervailing forces, such as financial aid, payback requirements and labor market conditions, as well as the conditions of teaching.

An alternative model for comprehending the major factors influencing teacher education policy and goals consists of four broad categories of what may be called requirements for achieving quality in teaching and teacher education. These four categories of requirements are (1) technical requirements, including intellectual competence, content and pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical skill; (2) personal-social-professional requirements, including motivation, personal meaning, salary, prestiege, recognition, and satisfying working conditions; (3) political requirements, including representativeness of the total population, adequate numbers of teachers, and perceived competence by the public; and (4) institutional-professional requirements, including maintaining a critical mass of productive teacher education professionals.

Even a cursory review of factors in this alternative model will quickly show that pursuing policies and goals based only on one or a few set of factors, for example pushing up teacher entry requirements with overreliance on tests, may run afoul, at least in the short run, of political requirements for population representativeness. No policy, regardless how comprehensive, can please everyone or achieve every possible relevant objective. Nevertheless, effective policy will take account of as many relevant factors as possible, so as to stimulate convergent action by diverse constituencies rather than set up oppositional forces. Or put more simply, teacher education goals, at either the policy or institutional levels, should not be formulated so as to invite their own demise.

Strategies for Power Differences

Fourth, the achievement of teacher education goals through public policy requires a set of complementary action strategies. These strategies must be designed (1) to handle divergent as well as shared goals, and (2) to manage the power differential that usually exists among the different actors who participate in policy formulation and implementation.

Nakamura (1981) offers a simple matrix for alternative strategies based on the four possibilities presented as a result of either (1) symmetrical or asymmetrical power and (2) shared or non-shared goals. Of course,the real world is filled with a

multiplicity of actors whose visions, motivations and power quotients result in many more than four possibilities. Nakamura's matrix is nevertheless useful in developing alternative scenarios for how public policy and institutional goals may be defined, related and negotiated.

We need not at this time linger on the limited situations in which power is largely symmetrical and goals are mostly shared. When we find ourselves, even temporarily, in such an ideal condition, we are usually able, unless we have a penchant for blundering, to achieve signifficant progress toward an agreed upon goal. The conditions under which the United States entered into World War II seem to present a case of massive coordinated action toward an agreed upon goal, especially if one does not press for too many disconcerting details. However, even in the more confined and less dramatic events of life, a broad agreement on goals, and the presence of symmetrical power or the coordination of asymmetrical power, are not easily achieved.

Given the multiplicity of actors and factors affecting teacher education, divergence and conflicts over institutional goals and public policy are likely, even inevitable. Clearly, there are differences regarding such issues as the relationship of content knowledge to pedagogical education, candidate selectivity to population representativveness, uniform salary scales to merit pay, and professional self-regulation to administrative and legislative authority. Nor is power equally shared. Executive or legislative authority can (and has!) established certification guidelines over the ineffectual protests of university teacher educators. Continuing teacher education, inservice education, continues in many places on an administratively determined track despite the perennial pleas of teachers for change.

In the public policy arena, conflict is inevitable. Obviously, strategies for the resolution of conflicts are indispensable for progress toward effective, beneficial policy. Advocacy strategies represent one type or set of approaches to achieve a desired objective, or at least to prevent what is considered irreparable damage. The New Jersey certification struggle can be cited again as an appropriate use of advocacy or oppositional strategies in the face of superior power. When the governor and his lieutenants unilaterally constructed a teacher certification policy that clearly threatened legitimate teacher education positions for preparing quality teachers, a condition was created for clearcut advocacy by teacher educators. The value of confrontation in such a case is not to be measured by the heat it generates or the discomfort created in the participants, but by the degree to which a retrogressive policy was effectually deterred, and beneficial, or at least less retrogressive, policies were substituted.

Advocacy, when a situation demands it, requires the massing of intellectual, moral, political or economic power sufficient to offset an opposing power. Applied appropriately and intelligently, advocacy may well be the approach of choice when superior power is being applied without adequate consultation considered to be unwise, unjust or harmful.

Advocacy, however, is not always the appropriate approach of choice. Many situations call for what Nakamura terms "bargaining", in which the methods of conflict resolution and coalition building are more likely to be effective. The misapplication of advocacy pressure when bargaining, conflict resolution and coalition building are indicated (or vice versa) will probably be ineffective, and what is worse, counterproductive. Oppositional advocacy, when misapplied, overused or overextended, may actually reduce one's influence over policy development. Ineffective advocacy that is reduced to little more than public posturing, moral indignation, assertions of intellectual superiority, inconsequential threats, and glorious defeats, while sometimes emotionally satisfying in the short run, are not substitutes for either well planned and appropriately applied advocacy strategies or bargaining strategies. There are, of course, a few values for which we should be prepared to die; but these are not within the scope of this paper.

At the risk of upsetting some of my colleague deans and faculty in Virginia, I wonder out loud if what appeared to be their strongly expressed opposition to use of the National Teacher Examination for teacher certification was not an untimely use of oppositional advocacy when some bargaining may have been more effective. Granted that paper and pencil tests, including the NTE, are inadequate for measuring professional skills. However, would it not have been more beneficial to use a bargaining approach so as to build a coalition around larger shared goals, for example, strengthened licensing procedures. Such an approach could have set the stage for a short run reevaluation of teacher licensing requirements, including testing, as well as long term development of a full range of methods to improve teacher education and teacher standards across the board.

In another area, I would suggest that Albert Shanker's positive response to the appointment of William Bennett as Secretary of Education was a productive coalition building move. On the other hand, the negatively toned response of the National Education Association in referring accurately to Bennett's mixed performance on civil rights was counterproductive in terms of bargaining, and in addition probably achieved very little in shifting Bennett to NEA's position on affirmative action. Shanker and AFT are no less advocates of civil rights than NEA,

but their initial conciliatory approach to the new Secretary puts them, at least temporarily, in a more favorable position to bargain productively in future policy development.

In an similar vein, Shanker's recent call for a national teacher licensing exam can, I propose, be considered strong bargaining move in events that are increasingly converging in favor of rigorous teacher licensing. This widely publicized proposal has several positive aspects. It puts professional educators in the forefront of upgrading the teaching profession, a position that wins important public and political support. Its specificity and comprehensiveness make it easy to understand and accept by non-educators. On the other hand, it is open to refinement, does not preclude participation by teachers in test development, and it can rather easily be made a complementary part of a larger effort for educational improvements. Mary Futrell, in her somewhat cautious response for NEA noted that "the score of a test might be one aspect of a comprehensive state teacher evaluation program" (Education Week, February 6, 1985). I would say that it must certainly only be one piece. And my guess is Shanker also sees it as only one piece. But by taking the initiative on this one important piece, he has carried the policy development coalition process forward.

Summary

Peters and Waterman, writing about motivation In Search of Excellence, state: "The central problem with the rationalist view of organizing people is that people are not very rational" (1982, 53). In this paper I have discussed a fairly formidable array of systems, elements, models, factors, and strategies. I have encouraged us to put all this together in an overall organized system of thinking as a basis for effectively integrating institutional goal achievement and public policy development for teacher education. Even saying this in a summary sentence is formidable; putting into practice in the complex and ever shifting flow of real events is truly daunting.

What to do? Well, I will not relent, or repent as the case may be, in proposing that a thoughtful, and detailed, framework of thinking should undergrid policy and institutional initiatives in teacher education. How I will conclude is that, as we act, with deep commitment and frequently strong feelings, in shifting and complex events, toward institutional and policy goals, our actions, should be forthright and clear in their singularity and reflect a sophistication and subtelty that will cumulatively develop policy and institutional goals as complementary and mutually reinforcing.

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